

A MAGNET DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates generally to decorative magnets, and more particularly to a multi-magnet novelty device capable of carrying signs, advertisement displays, and interchangeable displays, on all of the device's multiple surfaces.

10 2. Description of the Related Art

The prior art includes devices that employ magnets arranged inside structures. For example, U.S. Patent No. 5,347,253 discloses a block that includes a magnet body inside. U.S. Patent No. 4,741,534 discloses a block that includes a metal ball inside, that ball being attracted to magnetic objects. Furthermore, it is known, for example, to
15 provide "refrigerator" magnets to secure pieces of paper to a metal surface.

While prior art arrangements have fulfilled their intended roles and functions in a more or less satisfactory manner, they have been less than desirable insofar as their ability to be utilized as miniature, multi-sided, decorative magnet devices for connecting
20 to magnetically attractive surfaces.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide an improved miniature, multi-
25 sided, decorative magnet device.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide an improved miniature, multi-sided, decorative magnet device of novel construction for use as a paperweight.

5 Still a further object of the present invention is to provide a decorative magnet device in the form of a polyhedron that includes at least one variably shaped magnet.

10 A polyhedron magnet device is provided for attaching to magnetically attractive surfaces and holding items. The device comprises a plurality of sidewalls extending in a longitudinal direction along the surface of the device, partitions, and end walls, which are placed perpendicularly to the sidewalls to form one or more magnet holding chambers and separation chambers. Magnets are placed into the magnet holding chambers. The separation chamber maintains magnetic interaction between magnets in separated magnet holding chambers. Advertising banners may be connected to the sidewalls and end walls by printing, adhesive substances, and magnetically attracting. It is the magnets that
15 create the magnetic attraction.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

20 The above and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will be more clearly understood from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a single magnet device in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 2a is a perspective view of a multiple magnet device in accordance with the present invention;

5 Figure 2b is a top view of the multiple magnet device of the present invention illustrated in Figure 2a;

Figure 2c is a side view of the multiple magnet device of the present invention illustrated in Figure 2a;

10 Figure 3a is a cross-sectional view of the multiple magnet device illustrated in Figure 2a, taken along lines A--A;

Figure 3b is a cross-sectional view of the multiple magnet device illustrated in Figure 2a, taken along lines B--B; and

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Figures 4a, b, and c are perspective views of a multi-magnet device in use in accordance with the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

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Referring to Figure 1, there is shown a polyhedron magnet device 8. The exemplary device of Figure 1 is of a rectangular or cube shape and includes a flat magnet inside. Each of device's six sides 10 can be used to display signs or pictures. Those

signs or pictures can be painted or glued to the surface of each of the sides 10. Similarly, interchangeable magnetically attractive sign or picture plates, made of magnetic or magnetically attracted material, can be connected to the sides of the inventive device. Because of its magnetic nature, the inventive device 8 can be used for display purposes or to hold papers, photographs, and other thin items against any magnetically attracted surface, for example a refrigerator or a clipboard.

In the present example, the inventive device is formed of light transparent material such as plastic, however, other materials that are not magnetically attractive may be used. The inventive magnet device 8 includes a chamber 12 for holding a magnet 14. The magnet 14 must possess a sufficient magnetic force to attract magnetic or magnetically attractive sign plates to sides of the magnet device or hold the device affixed to a magnetically attractive surface in horizontal and vertical positions.

The magnet 14 is allowed to move freely inside the chamber 12, so that any side 10 of the device 8 may be attached to a surface. The chamber 12 may be of any shape, e.g., oval, circular, rectangular, that enables free movement of the magnet 12 inside the chamber. Similarly, the magnet 14 may be of any shape. Preferably, the shape of the magnet 14 enables it to move its widest surface 16 closer to a side 10 of the device 8 that requires magnetic attraction force. For example, the magnet can be flat circular, flat rectangular, cube, and rectangular.

In the preferred embodiment, the chamber 12 is rectangular in shape, with rounded corners. Walls of the chamber 12 are flat and the rounded corners transition between walls. The magnet 14 is flat or pancake shaped, able to fully rotate inside the chamber 12. The flat shape and size of the exemplary magnet 14 should allow it to use its largest surface area 16 to fully align with a side 10 within the chamber 12 to interact with any magnetically attractive surface using its full magnetic force. The rounded

corners of the chamber 12 prevent the magnet 14 from being wedged in the corner and the flat walls allow the magnet 14 to come to direct contact with each wall.

5 In another embodiment of the present invention, illustrated in Figure 2a, the inventive device 20 includes three chambers 22, 24, and 26. Two chambers 22 and 26 are used to hold magnets 30. The separating chamber 24 is used to maintain a constant distance between magnets 30. The separation distance or the size of the separation chamber 24 is sufficient to maintain magnetic interaction between magnets 30 in chambers 22 and 26. Various items, solids, liquids, and gasses, may be placed into the
10 separation chamber for observation by a user. It is preferred that such items are non-magnetically attractive, however, magnetically attracted items may also be used.

Figure 2b is a top view of the device shown in Figure 2a. The inventive device is shown to comprise long sidewalls 32, two partitions 34 and two end walls 36. Partitions
15 34 are made in such a manner as to form a rounded angle with long sidewalls 32 around its edge on the side facing the end wall 36 in chambers 22 and 26. The radius of the formation may be, for example, two millimeters, as shown in the example of Figure 2b. Similarly, the radius of the area of contact between the end wall 36 and the long sidewalls 32 may be 0.5 centimeters. The reason for the above-described curvature is to prevent
20 magnets 30 from being wedged in areas of contact between end walls 36, long sidewalls 32 and partitions 34.

To further assure that the magnetic force of magnets 30 is fully utilized, in one embodiment the present invention uses flat or pancake shaped magnets 30 (see Figure
25 2a). A flat magnet will always use its widest area, and therefore its maximum strength, to interact with other magnetically attractive objects.

A shape of the end walls 36 defines a cross section of the inventive device 20. In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 2b, the end walls 36 are of a rectangular shape. This, therefore, dictates that the number and/or shape of long sidewalls 32 is four. In other embodiments of the present invention, end walls 36 may be shaped like a triangle, tetragon, circle, oval, square, rectangle, pentagon, hexagon, star, or any other shape, thereby defining the shape of the cross section of the device 20. In addition to varying shape, the device 20 and the chambers 22, 24, and 26 can be made of varying sizes.

Figure 2c is a side and cutaway view of the device shown in Figure 2a. Figure 2c illustrates one possible manner of manufacturing of the inventive device. Here, for a rectangular device, three long sidewalls 32 are assembled with two partitions 34 and two end walls 36 to create receptacles for two magnets 30. The fourth long sidewall 32 covers the remaining opening above chambers 22, 24, and 26 to seal the magnets 30 and complete the device.

As can be seen in Figure 3a, a cross-sectional view of the device 40, which may be made of cardboard, plastic, or other suitable material, taken along lines A--A of Figure 2a. The ratio of a length of the interior separation chamber 24 to the length of the device 40 is about 54%. The ratio of a length of each of the magnet holding chambers 22 and 26 is about 23%. The above-described ratios are calculated to position magnets in such distance to each other as to promote interaction, which is the magnetic attraction between magnets 30.

Figure 3b illustrates a cross-sectional view of the device 40 taken along lines B--B of Figure 2a. Here, the end wall 36 is in proportion of about 40% to the length of the device 40, the outside corner radius is in proportion of about 6% and the inside rounded corner radius is in proportion of 8% to the length of the device 40.

The above described device constructed as described above will allow flat magnets 30 to rotate within chambers 22 and 26 in such a manner that both the magnets are attracted to each other by the mutual magnetic force and held back only by partitions 34 on respective sides of the chambers 24 and 26 when the device 40 is moved, shaken, or rotated. When the device 40 is allowed to approach a magnetically attractive surface, magnets 30 change direction of their position within respective chambers 22 and 26 by 90 degree so as to contact, in a parallel relation with the contact surface, to the magnetically attractive surface. The easy movement of magnets 30 is enabled by the curvature of the edge of partitions 34.

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The above described inventive device and its variations can be used as a paperweight or paper holder, a refrigerator magnet, and an advertising device, wherein copies for advertisement are connected to each surface of the main body. Figures 4 a-show the inventive device 20 in use, connected to a magnetically attractive surface 56. A magnetic banner 50 is connected to the device 20 in one embodiment, and a sign 54 is painted or glued to the device 20 in another embodiment. Furthermore, a novelty item 52 is placed into the separation chamber 24 for viewing or for making sounds.

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The above description is given by way of example only. Changes in form and details may be made by one skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

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